

In the Claims

The following listing of the claims replaces all previous listings.

1.-24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) A method for using a coupler including a U-shaped body with first and second surfaces including an overlap region therebetween defining a U-shaped spacing, and a first U-shaped fiber trough member, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a terminal end of the first trough member coupled to the coupler, wherein the terminal end was inserted in a longitudinal direction into [[a]] the U-shaped spacing defined by the coupler;

sliding a locking element on the coupler parallel to the longitudinal direction to release a spring from a locking position; and

removing the terminal end of the first trough member from the U-shaped spacing so that the terminal end slides past the spring.

26. (Original) The method of claim 25, further comprising the steps of:

providing a terminal end of a second trough member in a further spacing defined by the coupler on a second side of the coupler;

sliding the locking element in an opposite direction to release the spring from the locked position relative to the second trough member; and

removing the terminal end of the second trough member from the further spacing.

27.-40. (Canceled)

41. (Currently Amended) A method for use of a coupler and a trough system including first and second trough members, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a terminal end of the first trough member coupled to the coupler and a terminal end of the second trough member coupled to the coupler, wherein the terminal ends were inserted in a longitudinal direction into first and second spacings defined by the coupler, wherein

the first trough member is held to the coupler with a first spring portion, and wherein the second trough member is held to the coupler with a second spring portion;

releasing a locking element to release the first spring portion to release the terminal end of the first trough member without releasing the second spring portion holding the terminal end of the second trough member; and

removing the terminal end of the first trough member from the first spacing.

42. (Previously Presented) A method for use of a coupler and a trough system including first and second trough members, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a terminal end of the first trough member coupled to the coupler and a terminal end of the second trough member coupled to the coupler, wherein the terminal ends were inserted in a longitudinal direction into first and second spacings defined by the coupler;

releasing a plurality of first locking elements on the coupler in a direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction to release a plurality of first springs from a locking position to release the terminal end of the first trough member without releasing a plurality of second springs holding the terminal end of the second trough member; and

removing the terminal end of the first trough member from the first spacing so that the terminal end of the first trough member slides past the first plurality of springs.

43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 42, further comprising the steps of:

releasing a plurality of second locking elements on the coupler in a direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction to release the plurality of second springs from a locking position to release the terminal end of the second trough member; and

removing the terminal end of the second trough member from the second spacing so that the terminal end slides past the second plurality of springs.